Relief to plantation sector

2040. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the State Government of Kerala exempted the plantations from payment of agriculture income tax for the year 2003-2004 to provide relief to plantation sectors;

(b) whether Government would consider to exempt coffee and tea plantations from excise duty and direct the public sector banks to reschedule the loans;

(c) whether Government would consider to introduce a package of assistance to the plantation sector and its labourers; and

(d) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The issue will be examined as part of forthcoming Budget exercise.

Supply of gas to Pipavav Project

2041. DR. A. K. PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to allocate 2.25 MMSCMD gas to Pipavav Power Project in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government of Gujarat has requested the Central Government to allocate additional quantity of gas at *prorata* basis to Power Sector without any diversion; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Gas Linkage Committee in its meeting held on 26.5.2000 approved an

'in principal allocation' of 2.25 MMSCMD of natural gas effective from 2003 for the proposed 650 MW gas based power project to be set up at Pipavav, Gujarat. The allocation was subject to investment decision to be taken by the Management Committee of the Tapti Field for the additional development of the field. The Management Committee has not taken any decision.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of Gujarat had requested for additional allocation of gas to their power plants on *prorata* basis from HBJ. To overcome the power shortage additional quantity of gas to an extent of 0.5 MMSCMD was given to Gujarat Industries Power Company Limited (GIPCL).

Problem faced by refineries in Assam

2042. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the oil refineries located in Assam face difficulties as regards crude supply;

(b) whether Government have any plan to improve this difficulty to save the refineries there; and

(c) whether Government are taking steps to explore more oilfields in Assam through ONGC and OIL or any other agency to get the crude?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Various options are under consideration of the Government. No final decision has been taken as yet.

(c) Besides offer of blocks under the New Exploration Licensing Policy by the Government, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited and Oil India Limited are implementing work programmes in their exploration blocks and oilfields in Assam.

Exploration of oil and gas

2043. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the places in the country where exploration of oil and natural gas has been undertaken by all oil companies during the Ninth Plan; Company-wise and location-wise;